(b) if so, the names of States which are following this practice;

(c) what steps are being taken by Centre to make the other States fall in line so as to avoid the menace of the bigamy for which women are increasingly falling prey;

(d) whether the Government propose to introduce a Central legislation for compulsory registrations of marriages in India like registrations of births and deaths; and

(e) if so, when will it be initiated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI HARIN PATHAK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Himachal Pradesh, Goa and Maharashtra.

(c) Registration of marriages solemnized or contracted under the Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872, the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936 and the Special Manage Act, 1954 is compulsory. Section 8 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 provides that if the State Government is of opinion that it is necessary or expedient so to do, it may provide that the entering of the particulars of Hindu Marriages in the Hindu marriage register shall be compulsory in the State or in any part there of, whether in all cases or in such cases as may be specified. Registration of marriages solemnized otherwise than under the Special Marriage Act, 1954 is permissible under section 16 of the said Act if such marriages fulfil certain conditions as laid down under chapter III of that Act. the question of making registration of Hindu marriages compulsory could thus be considered by the State Governments as per the local situations prevailing in those States.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Refusal for Padma Bhushan Award

2215. DR. ABRAR AHMED: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any recipient of Padma Bhushan award this year has refused to accept it; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Shri Dattopant Bapurao Thengadi and Shri Sidh Raj Dhadda whose names were announced on 26th January, 2003, have declined to accept the Padma Bhushan Award.

Arrest of yourftj-children under POTA

2216. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) is it true even young children are being arrested under POTA in Jharkhand;

(b) if so, has the Ministry of Home Affairs asked from State Governments the basis of these arrests; and

(c) how many minors have been arrested under POTA in different parts of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI HARIN PATHAK): (a) to (c) The Government of Jharkhand has intimated that two cases involving persons aged 17 years and 18 years have been registered under the POTA, 2002. The implementation of the POTA, 2002 is the responsibility of the State Governments/UT Administrations and the details of the persons arrested under the Act throughout the country are not centrally maintained in this ministry.

Population

†2217. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total population of the country at the time of independence alongwith the total ratio of minorities out of the same;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.